

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT RECORD KOBUK-SEWARD PENINSULA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Meeting Location: Anchorage, Z.J. Loussac Public Library

Meeting Date: March 9, 2004

Purpose: Identify public issues and concerns with BLM managed lands in the Planning Area.

Number of public in attendance: Two

BLM personnel in attendance: Bob Schneider, Jeanie Cole, Lon Kelly, and Bob Lloyd

Meeting format: Through a PowerPoint presentation, attendees were introduced to what an RMP does and why BLM is doing a new one. They were also given examples of decisions that might come out of an RMP. They had the opportunity to review maps of land status, State identified RS2477 routes, reindeer grazing allotments, anadromous streams, Seward 1008 PLO locations (mineral entry), guide use areas, and game management units in the Planning Area. Participants were asked to express their concerns and issues with BLM-managed public lands. These are documented below. An Interested Party letter explaining the types of decisions made in the RMP and giving an overview of the initial steps in planning was distributed. In addition, a small-scale map of the planning area and copy of the PowerPoint presentation were available for attendees to take. A scoping comment sheet that can either be filled out at the meeting or returned to BLM at a later date was also made available to attendees.

Issues/Questions/Concerns:

1. The fee for commercial guides is too high and if the guide is using other federal lands besides BLM, they have to pay both federal agencies which can add up to a fairly high percentage of their gross profit.
2. Caribou habitats and management
 - a. The planning area includes much of the known range and crucial habitats for the Western Arctic Caribou herd (WACH), including part of the calving grounds, insect relief, winter summer migratory routes, and wintering areas.
 - b. This plan needs to address caribou management and human uses like subsistence that are dependent on caribou. Plan area includes most of the villages that depend on the WACH.
 - c. An ecosystem approach to managing these caribou is strongly recommended.

- d. BLM should maintain a continued close working relationship with the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group and seek to integrate the WACH Management Plan into the RMP.
 - e. Fire management as related to winter range and lichen for WACH.
- 3. Strategic impacts of industrial development on caribou habitats, caribou movements and subsistence lifestyles are an issue of increasing importance in this area. Particularly transportation corridors associated with industrial development.
- 4. Reindeer-caribou management conflicts will be an issue on or near the Seward Peninsula.
- 5. Subsistence and recreational use conflicts are an important current issue in some parts of the planning area and need to be addressed for the long term, especially on the Squirrel and upper Kobuk Rivers. This will require an integrated effort on the part of all agencies and landowners.
- 6. The planning area includes important riverine habitats for fish species including Dolly Varden (arctic char), arctic grayling, chum salmon, sheefish and other whitefish species.
- 7. The Wulik, Kivalina and parts of the Noatak river systems are probably of international significance for maintaining and managing Dolly Varden populations
- 8. The planning area encompasses important habitats for certain charismatic raptors like gyrfalcons, peregrine falcons, rough-legged hawks and some golden eagles.
- 9. Bird watching is becoming an increasingly popular activity in western Alaska, especially on the Seward Peninsula road system. Habitats for certain upland species like bristle-thighed curlew, lesser golden plover, bluethroat, arctic warbler and gray-headed chickadee may require special management consideration by BLM.
- 10. Given the patchwork nature of land ownership in the planning area, it is very important that management approaches for fish and wildlife be integrated and complimentary to the greatest degree possible. An ecosystem management approach is highly desirable, especially for caribou.
- 11. BLM policy should prohibit reintroduction of any non-indigenous species (comment made in relation to authorizing other types of livestock besides reindeer).
- 12. Paleontological sites: Wrench Creek and Deering (location of oldest record of caribou for North America 1.5 million years).
- 13. Would it be appropriate to designate the western arctic calving grounds, insect relief corridors, and major migration routes as ACECs?
- 14. BLM should provide access to public lands that are adjacent to private lands.
- 15. OHV designations: There are many trails in the northwest area that have been used by the people who live there for hundreds or thousands of years.
- 16. NANA may have maps of existing trails within the Planning Area.
- 17. Wild and Scenic Rivers: many rivers in the Planning Area would probably qualify as wild and scenic. The Kivalina River was mentioned as one that might be eligible. Values include: arctic char and post calving caribou aggregations. Red Dog Mine is at the headwaters of the Wulik River.

18. BLM should allocate the number of commercial operators and assign them to certain areas as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service do. Need to set recreational carrying capacity in the Squirrel River.
19. Appropriate levels of use by guides, transporters and air taxi should be determined and implemented.